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**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Kremmling Field Office
P.O. Box 68
Kremmling, CO 80459**

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-120-2009-0063 CX

PROJECT NAME: Tree Removal from Fraser to Grand Lake

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Grand County

APPLICANT: Grand County Dept. of Natural Resources

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION:

Grand County is responsible for the maintenance and safety of its county roads. Due to the extreme situation of the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic, Grand County will be removing HAZARD trees along approximately 60 miles of Grand County maintained right-of-way in the Fraser Valley to the Three Lakes area starting in mid-September. BLM administered land involved in the project is 3.5 acres. Grand County is planning on removing all hazard trees within 20 feet of the edge of the driving surface. A “hazard tree” is defined as any lodgepole pine tree that is five inches in diameter or greater whether green, infected or dead as well as a dead tree of any other species that is located within 20 feet of the edge of the driving surface. Live spruces, aspen and other non-lodgepole species will not be removed.

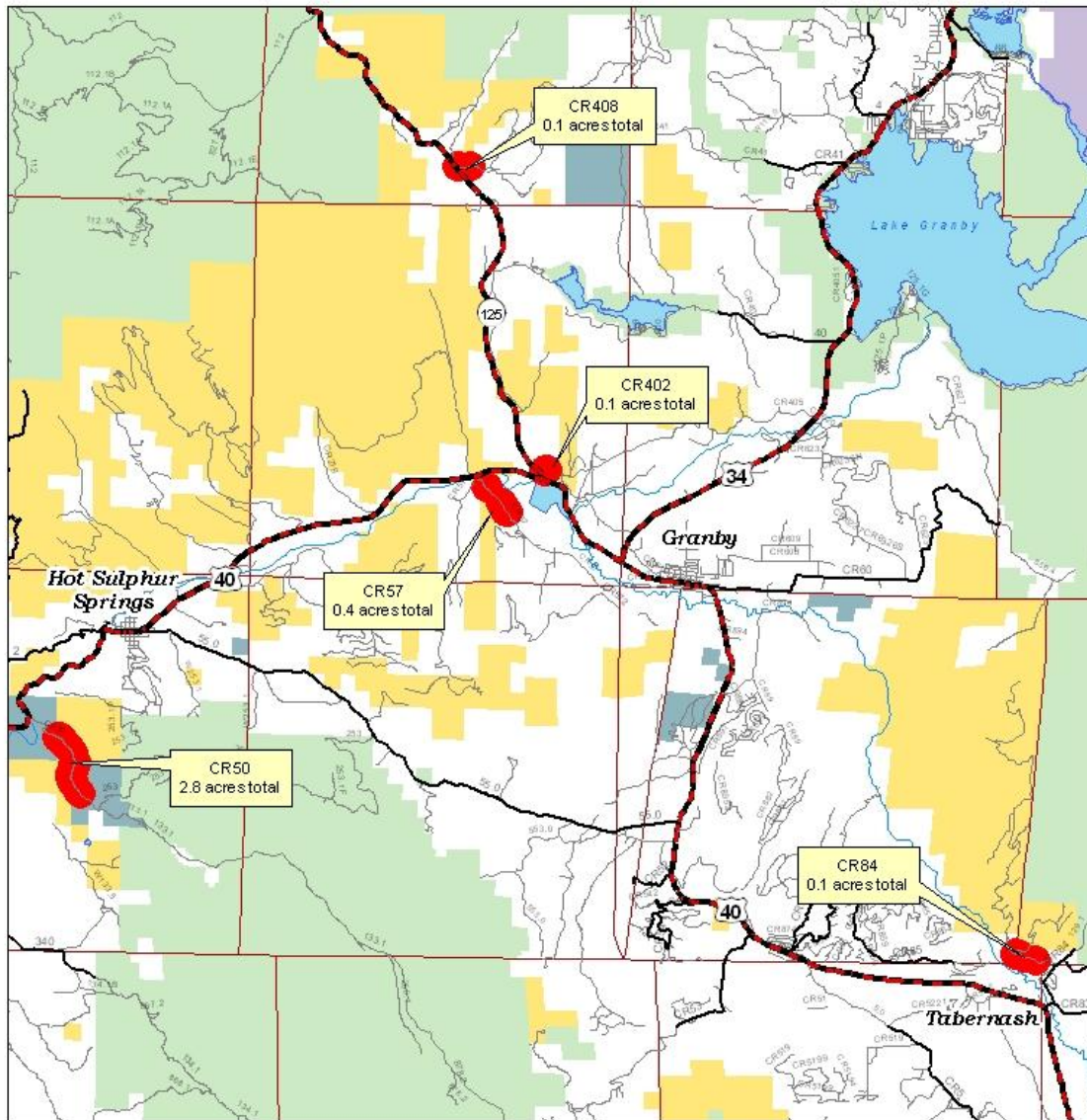
The trees that are within 20 feet of the driving surface of a county road need to be removed for the protection of roadway users and to ensure ingress/egress in times of emergency. Hazard trees are a threat to safety because they may fall on the roadway possible striking a roadway user or block the roadway, especially during an emergency such as a wildfire.

The trees will be mechanically removed by a feller buncher. The chipped materials will be spread along the right-of-way up to 3 inches deep. If there is more than three inches of material, it will be disposed of at another location. The contract calls for the trees to be removed and hauled off.

Design Features of the Proposed Action:

- Signs need to be posted along the county roads where tree removal is actively occurring warning the public of logging equipment and vehicles.
- No chips should be placed within 20 feet of a drainage.
- Equipment will not drive through any wetland areas.

Grand County Roads Vegetation Treatment



1:144,407

0 0.5 1 2 Miles



Legend

- Highway
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Bureau of Land Mgt
- State/BLM
- National Park
- US Forest Service
- National Wildlife Refuge
- GCR Veg. Treatment (3.5 Acres Total)
(Size Exaggerated for Visibility)

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PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3):

Name of Plan: Kremmling Resource Management Plan (RMP), Record of Decision (ROD), Updated.

Date Approved: February 1999

Decision Number/Page: Transportation and Access, P.14, "Provide access to allow multiple use management of public lands.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW: The Proposed Action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11.9, Section I (1) "Planned actions in response to wildfires, floods, weather events, earthquakes, or landslips that threaten public health or safety, property, and/or natural and cultural resources, and that are necessary to repair or improve lands unlikely to recover to a management approved condition as a result of the event....". None of the following extraordinary circumstances in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2, apply.

Extraordinary Circumstances	Yes	No
2.1 Have significant impacts on public health or safety		X
2.2 Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		X
2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA section 102(2)(E)].		X
2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
2.7 Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.		X
2.8 Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X
2.9 Violate a Federal Law, or a State, local, or tribal law or		X

requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		
2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		X
2.11 Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).		X
2.12 Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).		X

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility	Date Review Completed
Paula Belcher	Hydrologist	Soil, Water, Air & Riparian	8/11/2009
Bill B. Wyatt	Fire Archaeologist	Cultural Resources and Tribal Consultation	9-2-2009
Megan McGuire	Wildlife Biologist	T&E Species and Wildlife	8/11/2009
Kenneth Belcher	Forester	Forestry	8/17/2009 See remarks below.
Peter McFadden	Associate Field Manager	NEPA	9/2/09

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources: The number of trees identified for removal does not constitute an undertaking as fuelwood removal of 11 trees.

Forestry: Field review of the public lands potentially affected by the proposed action revealed that the only road that has hazard trees within 20 feet of the running surface is the Strawberry Road, CR84. About 11 live and dead lodgepole pine, comprising a little less than a cord of wood would be removed as per the proposed action. The action qualifies as a use of timber for which a free-use permit may be issued. The applicant for such a permit must be the agency involved, in this case the Grand County Dept. of Natural Resources, and not the individual who is representing the agency.

COMPLIANCE PLAN: N/A

NAME OF PREPARER: Susan Cassel

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Peter McFadden

DATE: 9/2/09

DECISION AND RATIONALE: I have reviewed this CER and have decided to implement the proposed action.

This action is listed in the Department Manual as an action that may be categorically excluded. I have evaluated the action relative to the 12 criteria listed above and have determined that it does not represent an extraordinary circumstance and is, therefore, categorically excluded from further environmental analysis.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:

DATE SIGNED: